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A longitudinal study examining elite soccer and rugby union players' transitions into elite coaching

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Context - literature

Elite coach pathways

(Christensen, 2013; Gilbert et al., 2006, 2009; Irwin et al., 2004; Nash & Sproule, 2009; Saiz et al., 2009; Schinke et al., 1995)

‘Idiosyncratic’ (Werthner & Trudel, 2009)

‘Fast-tracked’ (Rynne, 2014)

Socialisation into club culture (Blackett, Evans & Piggott, *in-press*)



Sensitising Concepts

- **Study 1 – Senior Club Directors**
- Bourdieu
- Athletic symbolic & cultural capital conversion into coaching symbolic & cultural capital = coach respect
- Coach ‘philosophies’ matched the club values
- **Study 2 – Academy Club Directors**
- Bourdieu & Foucault
- Valued formal sources of coach learning... but....
- Valued internal CPD programmes more so
- Governed academy philosophies/identity & coaching practice
- Surveillance (panopticism), technologies of power & self = docility

Study design

Level 3 'senior professionals'
formal coach education
qualification

2x Semi-structured interviews, 10-
12 months apart

(Deek, Werthner, Paquette and Culver, 2013;
Leduc, Culver & Werthner, 2012)

Retrospective *and* prospective
questioning

COACHING STRUCTURE

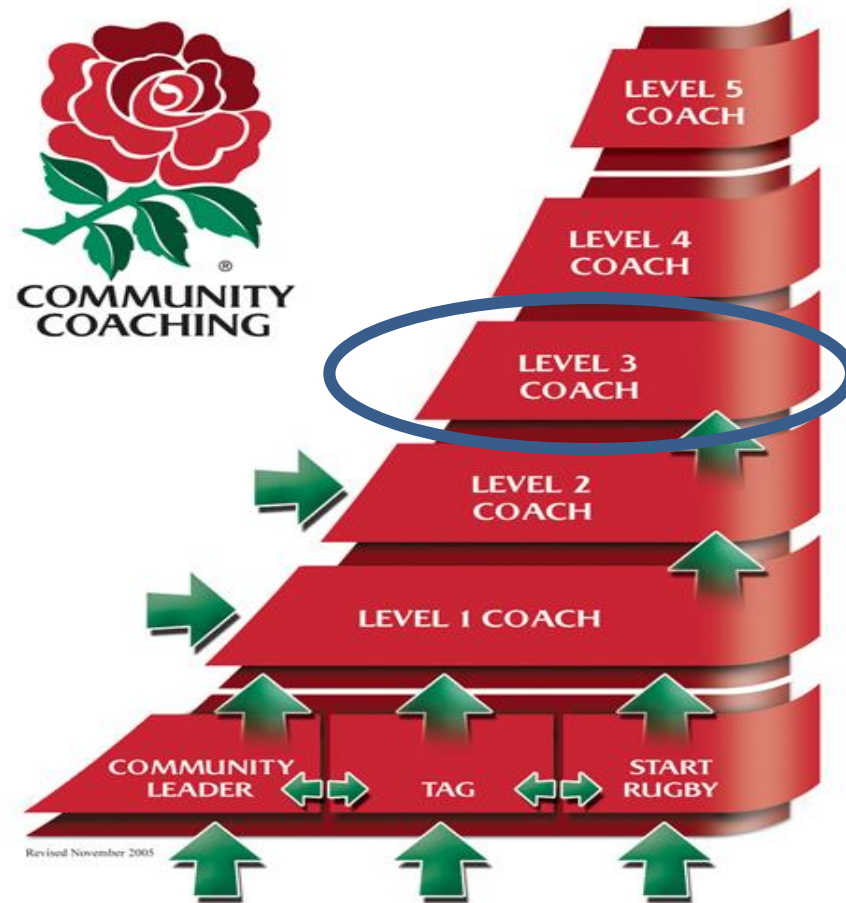
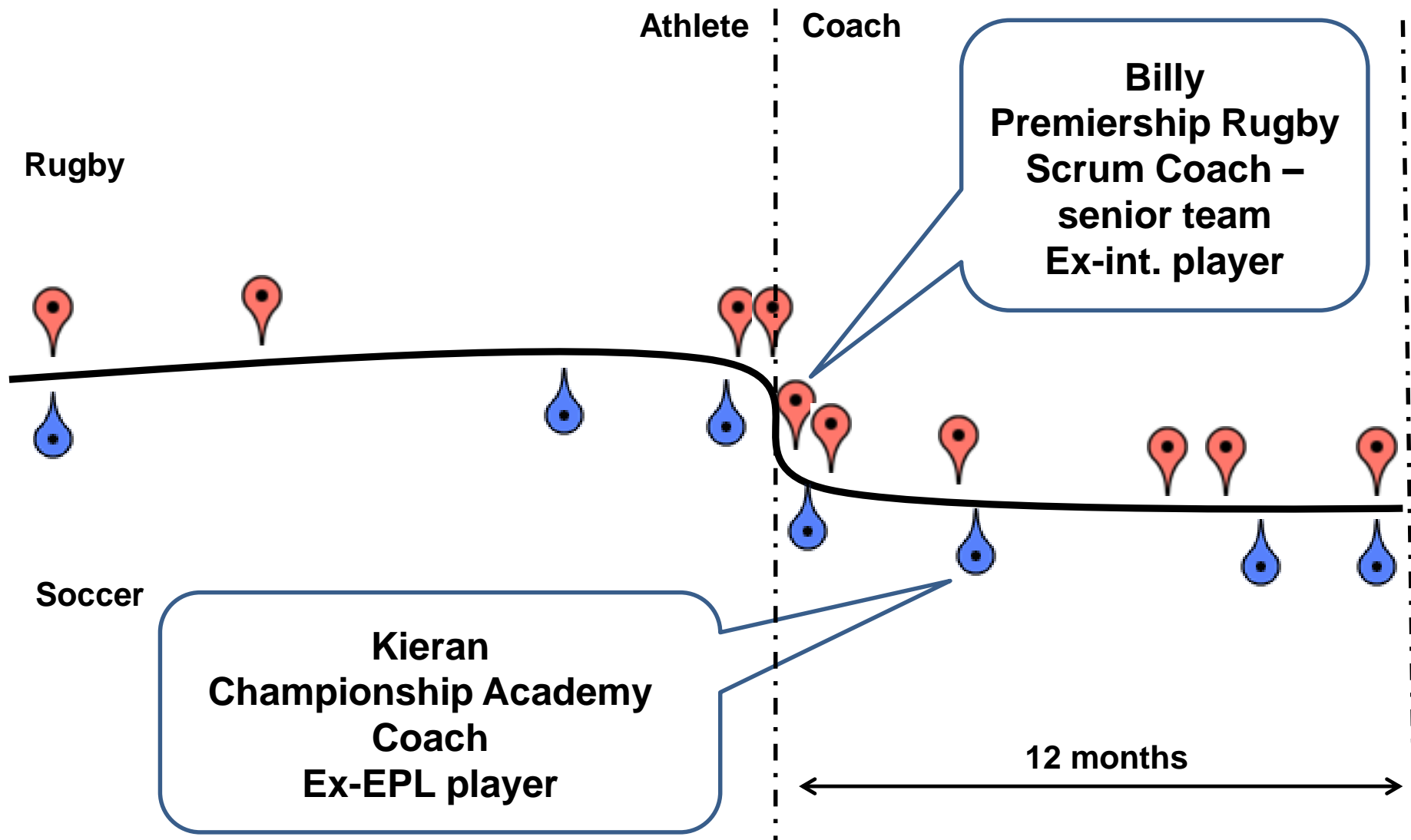
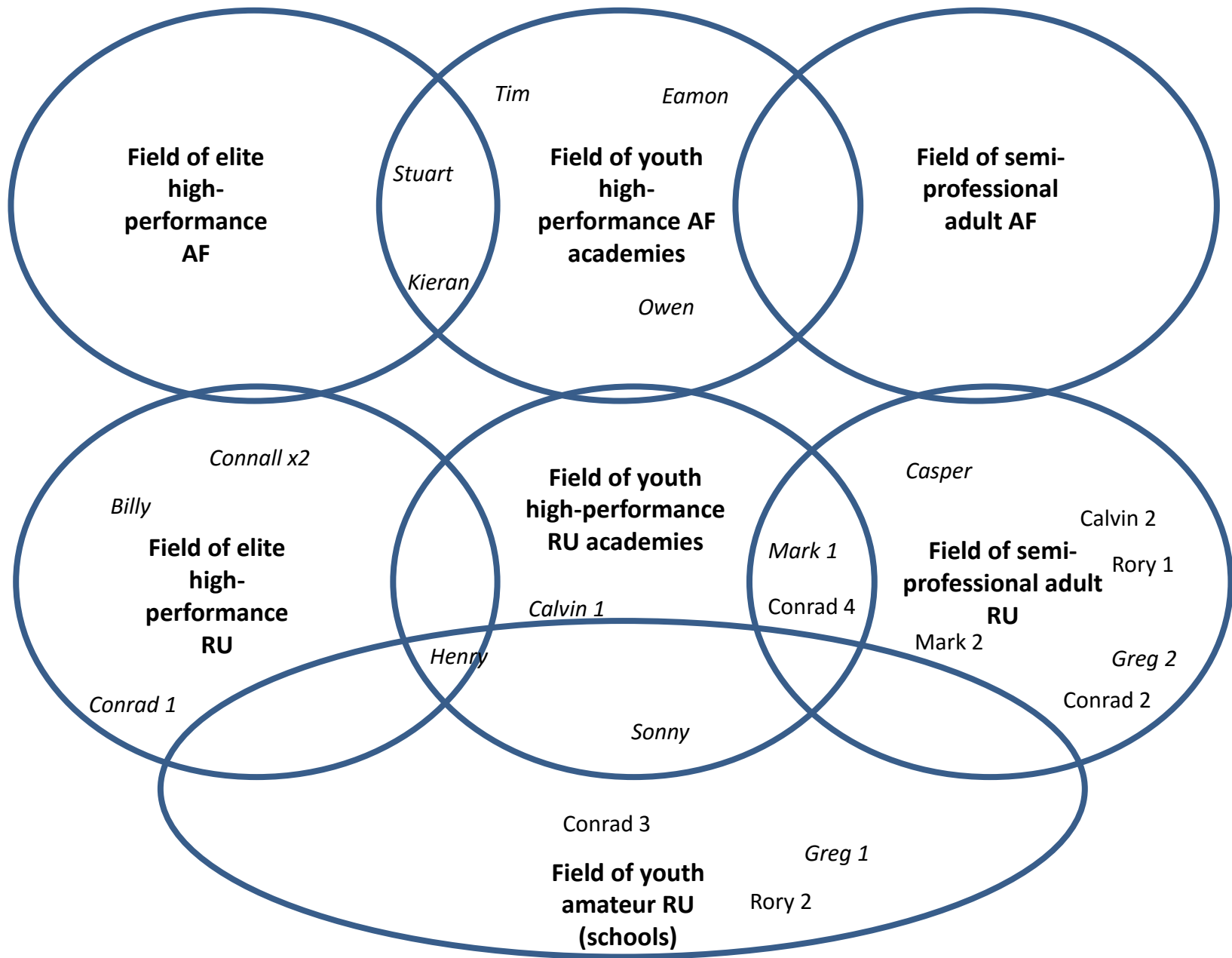


Figure 1. RFU coach pathway (RFU, 2005)

Sample characteristics





Results

Acculturation Process From Athlete To Coach

Transition Commencement

Output

Coaching Pathway Access Routes

**‘Aspirational’
or
‘Reluctant’**

Club values -
drawing athletes
through

Reflecting on a *Coaching* and *Playing* Philosophy

**Direct & Indirect
Coaching
Experiences**

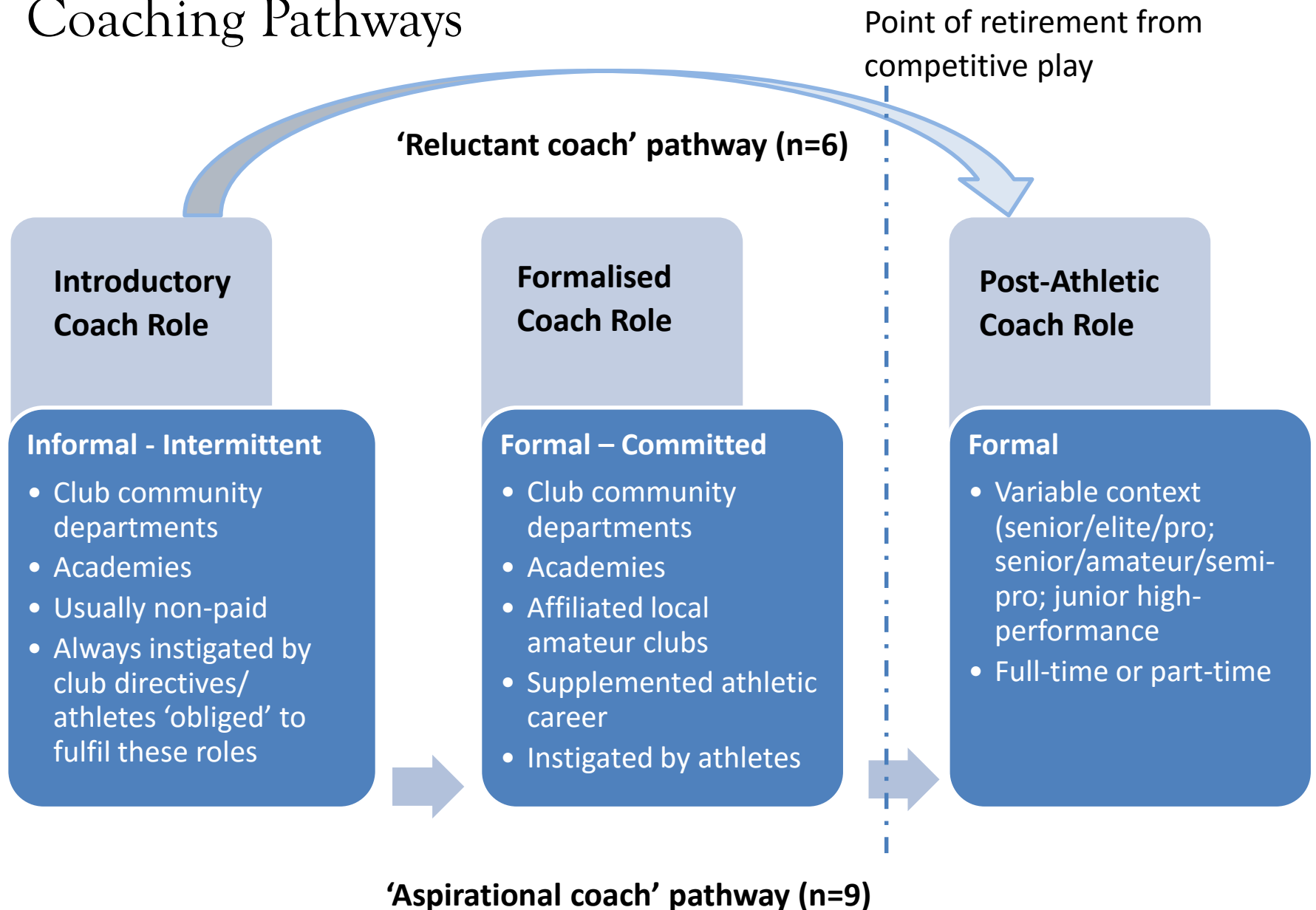
Significant
Others

Negotiation/ Consolidation of a Coach Identity

**Honest and True
to Personal
Values/Character**

Coaching Practice

Coaching Pathways



Discussion – Clubs drawing athletes through

13 / 15 participants attained their first coaching role with either their first (n=5) or last (n=8) club they represented as athletes

“Well I retired in the summer through injury, so May time, and (current Championship Football Club 1) have *offered*, well they *offered* me a coaching role, because my contract was expired with them...”
(Kieran, interview one)

“It wasn’t like when I was still playing and you know readying myself for retirement to go straight into coaching... I start working and then it’s right do you want to coach? I’m like, not really, I’ll give it a go and finding actually that I quite like it, I think I’m quite good at it.”
(Casper, interview one)

Coaching & Playing Philosophies

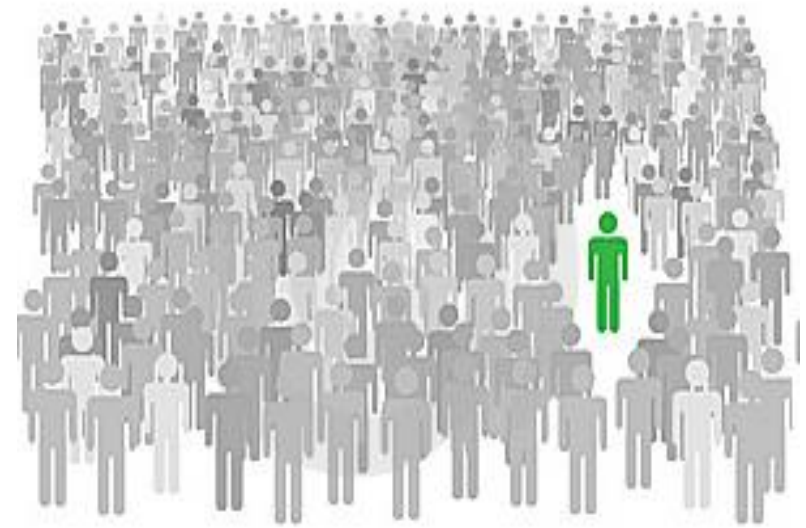
“I think a coaching philosophy is what *formation* is and or what team did I like playing in most and what way did I enjoy my football; and to be *honest*...”

“...I’ve watched games, I’ve watched the players, I’ve watched other managers’ philosophy, and I’ve looked at their principles in how they see the game.”

(Owen, interview one)

Discussion – ‘Philosophy’ development

- Conflict between ‘club philosophy’ and ‘individual philosophy’
- Brought upon by reflexive practices – formal mentors



“It comes back to if I have to live a *front*, I have to carry on with that, so I can’t copy you the whole time and live like you or coach like you all of the time. I want to be *myself* so I don’t have to turn a switch on every time I come to training...” (Greg, interview two)

Discussion – Coach identity

“Players are smart, players will *see through you* if you aren’t *honest* with them...” (Conrad, interview one)

Knowledge of self regarded as the most important feature for developing a coach identity

- Necessity of sustaining athletes’ respect (Blackett, et al., 2015; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002)

Honesty – contrasts to Goffman’s presentation of self, impression management & front/façade (cf. Jones, 2006)



Future considerations...

- How much impact do structural mechanisms (e.g. ideological and political) have on individual coach development?
- How are coaching philosophies ‘negotiated’ over an extended period of time by individuals? – Balance between formal and informal mentors
- When does a coaching philosophy become a coaching ideology?



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Thank you.

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